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produce sori. *Polypodium Maudslayi* (aureum var.) has highly ruffled and lacinate pinnae, and only occasionally, rarely, produces sori.

What are your observations as to the occurrence of *B. dissectum*?—R. C. B.

American Fern Society.

Report of the President for 1920.

The most important event in the history of the Fern Society during the past year was the increase in individual membership dues by one-half, a measure adopted by a nearly unanimous vote. There has since been no falling off in membership; the number of members has, on the contrary, increased to 271, a new mark for the Society. This response has been most satisfactory, and the healthy condition of the Society's finances is admirably summarized in the report of the Treasurer, a short statement which each member of the Society is urged to read carefully.

To a very great extent the usefulness of the Society is directly proportional to the size of its membership, for this determines not only the opportunities for correspondence and for exchange of specimens among those most interested in fern study, but largely sets the limit also to the circulation of the JOURNAL, which is our principal evidence of activity. With more members more pages could be published in each number, more money could be allowed for illustrations, and larger editions could be distributed. And with an increase in circulation, assuming that present editorial excellence is maintained, the influence of the JOURNAL would be increasingly great. Thus, particular attention is being given just now to enlarging the membership, the matter being in the hands of a special committee consisting of Robert A. Ware, Chairman, E. J. Winslow, and Mrs.

Carlotta C. Hall. Circulars containing a brief outline of the history of the Society, its needs, its purposes, and its various activities have recently been distributed to the members. It is urged that all do their part by securing one or more new members each, by bringing the Society and its JOURNAL to the attention of local nature study clubs, and by urging subscriptions from colleges and from public libraries even in smaller towns. We could double our membership if we would; and it seems well worth while to make the effort, if we are interested in fern study in anything more than a passive way.

The whole matter as to the success of the Society or the failure to attain its highest aims is determined chiefly by personal interest on the part of the members. Members as a whole care little for descriptions of new species. The growing plants are what really interest them,—relationship, the kind and degree of fertility, the main types of variation, the soil and habitat preferences, the local distribution and companion plants of a given species, and the like; but these fields are not well covered. Much scattered information can be found, no doubt, upon the sequence of the development of the ferns in spring, but we do not know whether the order of appearance noted in a single locality is true for a wide region. Would it not be worth while for 25 members to publish sequence lists for their respective localities, noting departures from year to year? Which fern of the eastern United States *is* the earliest in starting? Do most of the species which start first bring their spores to maturity first? Have we, as a matter of fact, followed most of our species through the season? There is not a fern of the United States, which, if the data can be got together from an intensely interested membership, is worth less than a full number of the JOURNAL, in spite of all that has been written of it in

the past; and this is putting the case very mildly indeed.

Symposia are frequently tiresome; nevertheless, the suggestion which has heretofore been advanced of taking up for study some common fern, or genus of ferns as represented in the United States, is not without merit. Our knowledge of the various species of our own locality is very uneven, far more so than can properly be charged to lack of opportunity for observation. Do we note individual characters only when they are outstanding? Are we too eternally interested in adding a new record to our list to study critically the ferns as we pass them by—"identified?" Are not the intimate details of the Christmas fern less known to us than those of the rarer species? Why do we fail to be truly inquisitive about our common species? *Dryopteris simulata* would have been described long before 1894 if fern students had known clearly from both field and herbarium study the essential characters of *D. noveboracensis* and *D. thelypteris*.

Without apology for either the questions or the exhortations, your President, who thanks you sincerely for the honor conferred upon him by re-election, suggests that by way of trying out this plan we shall all turn our attention this summer to the three species of *Dryopteris* just mentioned. The first two are within the reach of most of us, and all three have been written about a good deal during the last 25 years. Let us study these plants in the field, every phase of them, throughout the season; let us collect specimens from as diverse habitats as possible, showing all phases in size and development; let us compare the species, detail by detail, in our homes, jotting down the essential characters of each in parallel columns; and then let us send in, for publication in the JOURNAL, our observations or at least the facts new to us, or those of which we can find no record.

The benefits, aside from sharpening the powers of the individual observer, will presumably include an extension of the known range of *D. simulata*, at least, and the listing of many distinctive characters which may even require a redefinition of the other two species. Has any one found lately the exindusiate form of *D. noveboracensis* discussed long ago by Gilbert? What did D. C. Eaton write about the forms of this species? Have you ever come across *D. thelypterus* growing entirely submerged in a stream and putting out reduced leaves under water? These are the kind of things that ought to be studied by our whole membership, and the observations recorded. There should be 20 short articles by members in every issue of the JOURNAL.

Finally, we should make a practice of sending in to our Curator annually a package of selected complete specimens, with data full and accurate in every respect, for building up the Society herbarium. This should be a repository in which all our native ferns are represented by ample suites of specimens secured from every part of their range, designed to show not only local and chance variations but, what is more essential, the extremes which nearly all species attain normally in different parts of their range. In no other way than by consistent intelligent field work shall we ever know our ferns fully, either as to relationship and characters or as to distribution. This, over and above the personal profit and pleasure of fascinating field work, should be our serious purpose.

Respectfully,

WILLIAM R. MAXON, *President*.

Report of the Secretary for 1920.

There have been no special activities in the way of meetings undertaken by the Society during the past year.

Two members have died: Mrs. E. H. Bancroft and Dr. Charles Henry Holcombe. Seven members have resigned; and three have been dropped for nonpayment of dues. Twenty-four new members have been received and the membership (December 31, 1920) stands at 271, a gain of thirteen over last year, which establishes a new record for the Society. Mr. F. C. Greene changes from an ordinary to a life member.

Four amendments to the Constitution proposed by members of the council, were adopted. The text of these follows:

"Amend Article III by striking out Section 2 and substituting the following:

Applications for membership accompanied by the required fee of one dollar and fifty cents may be made at any time to the Secretary, and when so received, approved by two members of the Council, and acknowledged, the applicant shall be considered a member for the current year."

"Amend Article III by striking out Section 3 and substituting the following:

The Admission fee shall be one dollar and fifty cents, payable when application for membership is made. This fee shall also constitute the dues for the current year."

"Amend Article III by striking out Section 4 and substituting the following:

The annual dues shall be one dollar and fifty cents, payable January first of each year."

"Amend Article III by striking out Section 5 and substituting the following:

Any eligible person may become a life member on payment, at any time, of a fee of twenty-five dollars, and shall thereafter be subject to no dues or assessments. All such fees shall be held and invested as a permanent fund, the principal of which shall not be expended, but the income from which may be used for the purposes of the Society on vote of the Council. Contributions for the purpose and other available moneys may be added to this fund at the discretion of the Council."

It is hoped that the substantial increase in membership above noted may continue, and that the Society may continue to enjoy the generous support extended by its members in the past.

S. H. BURNHAM, *Secretary*.

Report of the Treasurer for 1920.

Cash on hand, Jan. 1.....	\$186.00
Membership dues for back years.....	\$ 4.00
1919.....	12.00
1920.....	227.00
1921.....	29.30
1922.....	1.50
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Total members dues rec'd.....	273.80
Subscriptions to JOURNAL, '17.....	2.00
1918.....	2.00
1919.....	.90
1920.....	39.68
1921.....	20.03
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Total subscriptions.....	64.61
Collection fees and inc.....	.85
Advertising.....	4.25
Illustrating.....	25.25
Special gifts.....	11.50
Interest.....	6.00
Authors corrections.....	2.50
Emergency Fund (sale of Back Numbers).....	51.25
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Total Receipts during 1920.....	440.01
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Grand Total Received.....	\$626.01
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Paid out.	
Secretary's expenses; postage, election of officers, etc., as per budget.....	\$ 29.06
Treasurer's expenses, postage and printing, as per budget.....	15.00
Curator expenses from budget allowance.....	1.17
JOURNAL expenses, Printing and Illustrating, Budget....	\$264.00
" " Postage, express, printing Deficit.....	28.18
" " Illustrations from Illustrating Fund ..	3.92
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Total JOURNAL Expense.....	296.10
Special Gift for purposes given.....	1.50
Exchange.....	.55
Emergency Fund for rare Back Numbers to fill sets.....	2.00
Curators expense as provided by 1919 Budget.....	10.00
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Total Paid out.....	\$355.38
Balance on hand Dec. 31, 1920.....	270.63
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	\$626.01

This balance includes the following:

Emergency Fund, Jan. 1.....	\$ 78.09	
Received.....	51.25	
	<u>129.34</u>	
Paid for rare numbers of JOURNAL.....	2.00	
	<u>127.34</u>	
Balance Dec. 31.....		127.34
Illustrating Fund, Jan. 1.....	1.33	
Received.....	8.50	
Rec'd refund for Illustrations mentioned in last report.....	16.75	
	<u>26.58</u>	
Paid out including refund to general Fund.....	20.67	
	<u>5.91</u>	
Balance Dec. 31.....		133.25
Forward.....		133.25
Holding from Council order for printing herbarium Catalogue.....	\$ 25.00	
Balance of Budget 1920 for Herbarium.....	8.83	
General Fund for ordinary expenses.....	103.52	
	<u>137.35</u>	
Total General Fund		270.60

SPECIAL FUND CREATED BY LIFE MEMBERSHIPS AND TRANSFERS FROM
EMERGENCY FUND

On hand Jan. 1, 1920.....	\$128.97
One Life Membership.....	15.00
Interest received.....	8.69
	<u>\$152.66</u>
Balance on hand Dec. 31.....	\$152.66

After the Life Membership Dues were advanced to \$25.00 the Life Member elected in January, 1920, very generously gave the Society \$10.00. By action of the Council this has been transferred from the General Fund of the Society to the Special Fund.

In view of the large sales of back numbers last year, increasing our Emergency Fund to \$127.34 I have proposed that \$100 of this be transferred to the Special Fund. By action of the Council this has been done and we now have a really respectable Fund salted away for the unknown emergencies of the future.

With renewed thanks for the fine co-operation of members and officers I respectfully submit this report.

JAY G. UNDERWOOD, *Treasurer.*

Report of the Editors for 1920.

This year the JOURNAL has returned to its wonted prosperity in the matter of copy, which has been abundant and, as we like to have it, reasonably varied. Our great problem during the year has been to get along with printing costs which have increased about 90 per cent and an income which has not increased at all. By omitting all illustrations not given and by drawing on the emergency fund, the Council has made it possible to print the usual number of pages. Next year, with the increased dues and, we trust, new memberships and subscriptions, we hope to put the JOURNAL back on the old footing. For a time, however, until we know definitely how we stand, illustrations are not to be expected in every number.

Our financial difficulties have had the gratifying effect of bringing gifts, from a number of members, principally for illustrations. For them and for the interest in the JOURNAL to which they testify, the editors are very grateful. One illustration, that in no. 3, has been provided from them and there is money enough on hand for another, which will appear as soon as a suitable subject comes to hand.

Some progress has been made in the sale of back numbers and members are again reminded that we shall not long be able to supply Volume 1 complete; also that we are in the market for any spare copies of numbers 1 and 3 of that volume.

R. C. BENEDICT,
E. J. WINSLOW,
C. A. WEATHERBY.

Editors

No report had been received from the Curator up to the time of going to press.

Dr. Charles Henry Holcombe, a member of the Society since 1897, died at Brookline, N. H., Feb. 23, 1920. Dr. Holcombe was born at Southwick, Mass., in 1859. He graduated from the Harvard Medical School in 1886 and, after two years at Milford, N. H., removed to Brookline. There he resided for all the rest of his life, winning the respect and affection of his fellow-citizens and, as a physician, building up a practice which extended to much of the surrounding country. Even in his last illness he was still ministering to patients "when he was as bad as they."

Dr. Holcombe's interest in plants and natural history in general began early in life and was never lost. The "children of the wild" appealed to him, not only by their beauty and scientific interest, but as evidence of an all-wise Creator's power and love. His "botany can" was a frequent companion in the intervals of his professional duties, and he was often wont to bring to some house-bound patient, flowers of his latest collecting in wood and meadow. A record and memorial of his botanical work remains in the large herbarium which he had formed.

New Members:

- Bass, Mrs. George, 85 71st St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
- Ferguson, William C., 60 Front St., Hempstead, N. Y.
- Wilsie, Elmer, J., Tomkins Cove, Rockland Co., N. Y.
- Youngs, Mrs. Jennie B., 309 South Seward Ave., Auburn, N. Y.

Changes of address:

- Bear, Mrs. Charles U., 654 Putnam Ave., Detroit, Mich.
- Fellows, Dana W., 7671 Amboy Road, Tottenville, N. Y.
- Marshall, Dr. Ruth, Rockford College, Rockford, Ill.
- Ridlon, H. C., Green Mountain School, Bennington, Vt.
- Steil, Dr. William N., 115 South Warren St., Madison, Wis.
- Wilcox, Prof. Alice W., Brennan College, Gainesville, Ga.

Mrs. Edward A. Eames, 155 Bryant St., Buffalo, N. Y., wishes to purchase a copy of Eaton's Ferns of North America.

Mr. Clarkson has interested himself in our campaign for new members to such good effect that he has added seven names to our membership list. We cannot help speculating as to the result if one in three of our entire membership should take action. We have visions of an enlarged Fern Journal with a frontispiece in color for each number issued six times per year.

The Editors tender their best thanks to Miss Ida A. Stebbins for a gift of ten dollars for illustrations.

The editors are about ready to believe in the existence of a special evil spirit whose sole business is to prevent the prompt appearance of the JOURNAL. Last year, the post office was its agent; this spring, just as no. 2 was ready and in the printers' hands, their establishment was put completely out of action by labor troubles. Not until now have we been able to issue this number. The delay is particularly unfortunate because of the suggestions for the season's work contained in the notes and reports: we can only hope that members will bear these suggestions in mind for next year.

The President has appointed the following committee to nominate officers for 1921:—Robert A. Ware, Chairman, Miss Nellie Mirick and Harold W. Pretz. Prof. C. C. Plitt will be Judge of Elections.